

schools and community college campuses, creating tens of thousands of new construction jobs. The American Clean Energy and Security Act creates incentives for new research and development, creating thousands of new job opportunities related to the production of advanced batteries, wind turbines, solar power, and other sustainable technologies. In addition, Madam Speaker, we passed a number of bills to spur small business job creation through tax incentives and employment opportunities for our veterans.

Ultimately, for sustainable job growth, the private sector must feel comfortable to return to hiring employees. Large companies will not expand while the value of their firm drops. Small companies will not expand while the owners' assets are disappearing. And those assets did drop. From its high of over 14,000 in October of 2007, the Dow Jones Industrial Average began a precipitous decline to just over 6,600 in March of this year. Since then, thanks to our actions, the market has recovered more than 50 percent.

Companies will not expand while consumer confidence declines, and it did decline to 25 points in February of this year, the lowest level since the conference board's inception in 1967. Since then, thanks again to our actions, consumer confidence has continued to improve, hitting 48.7 in October, almost doubling.

Companies will not expand, Madam Speaker, while the national economy is contracting, and it did indeed contract, starting in the third quarter of 2008. It declined an astounding 6.3 percent in the fourth quarter and 5.7 percent in the first quarter of 2009, but our actions have helped. GDP increased 2.8 percent in the third quarter of 2009 and continues to grow this quarter as well.

This February, the horrific pace of job losses began to ease. Job losses in May fell to 300,000. In August through October, they averaged 135,000 a month. In November, just 11,000 jobs, net, were lost in the American economy, continuing to contribute to the decline in the unemployment rate.

Madam Speaker, we're not out of the woods just yet. Millions of Americans are still out of work. But we've started to turn the economy around. We've begun to stabilize the stock market, the housing sector, and the GDP. Madam Speaker, we've begun to create conditions for job growth, and now we must partner with the private sector to ensure that millions of Americans can return to work.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DICKS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DICKS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE REDMEN OF SMITH CENTER HIGH SCHOOL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Madam Speaker, on the Kansas prairie, in a small town named Smith Center, an exceptional tradition has been built and maintained over the course of decades. The Redmen of Smith Center High School have achieved great things on the football field.

There are few, if any, high school football fans in Kansas who are unaware of Smith Center's reputation. The parents and boosters of Smith Center High School have watched with pride as their sons bested opponents on the gridiron in 79 consecutive contests. Coach Roger Barta and his Redmen football team have won over 300 games in the past 32 seasons. They've racked up eight State championships, five of them in a row.

Smith Center was on the longest active 11-man high school football winning streak in the Nation. The streak was snapped in the Kansas State 2-1A championship game 2 weeks ago. Every player on the Redman football squad, from freshman to senior, experienced their first high school defeat at the hands of the Centralia High School Panthers. It was a heartbreaking loss for an extraordinary group of boys.

I had the opportunity to participate in several pregame coin flips over the past few seasons, including this year's State title game. Each time I witnessed a very talented football team with a very spirited group of fans. Yet, all the success the team has enjoyed on the field has never been what makes them so remarkable. Football is just what attracts notoriety and our applause. It's the building of character and lifelong traits that matter in Smith Center. Following their first loss in 6 years, Coach Barta reminded his players, "We've never judged ourselves on wins and losses."

The truly exceptional work being done on the plains of Kansas is the development of character in the boys of the Smith Center football team and the students of Smith Center High School. It is the respect each athlete is taught by their coaches. It's the insistence of integrity insisted upon by their teachers. It's the values instilled in each son by their parents and community.

Joe Drape, a New York Times Sports writer, recently authored a book entitled, "Our Boys: A Perfect Season on the Plains with the Smith Center Redmen." In his book, Mr. Drape extols the virtues we, in rural America, hold dear. Humility, sacrifice, unwavering commitment, all are characteristics that are exemplified by the Redmen and their fans. Additionally, as I was told by one of the game officials after the State title game, this is the only team that year after year, every game, they gather on the field, hold hands,

and a prayer is offered by one of the coaches or one of the players on the team.

Redmen football is what received the attention, but behind the scenes is where the most impressive and longest lasting accomplishments are discovered. Football is simply a teaching tool used by the community. Coach Barta was quoted in the book as stating, "None of this is really about football. What we're doing is sending kids into life who know that every day means something."

This attitude exemplifies the teaching, coaching, and parenting philosophy of rural America. Our population may be dwindling and our communities aging, but our commitment to raising good children and preparing them for life after high school is something that will never diminish. School pride is important to a community, but it pales in comparison to the role a teacher, coach, or parent plays when he or she helps a child succeed. I'm thankful that Coach Barta and his staff understand this, and I'm thankful to come from a part of the country that understands this.

Congratulations to the Smith Center Redmen, their football team, for their remarkable success, and thanks to the team, the community, and the school that are such great ambassadors for our way of life on the plains of Kansas.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING THE LIFE OF REAR ADMIRAL DAVID M. STONE, USN (RET.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor and mourn the loss of a great American. Rear Admiral David M. Stone, United States Navy (Retired) recently passed away, and as a result, we are a lesser Nation. He was a proud son of Illinois, not the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, my State, but I am compelled to see that the achievements of this remarkable man are forever captured in the record of our proceedings because Dave Stone was my shipmate.

We graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1974 and served together as fellow Surface Warfare Officers at sea and ashore for nearly three decades. In the course of those years, I witnessed Dave Stone consistently offer our Nation all of his enormous talent and energy. At the Academy, he led Navy's basketball team with an unmatched passion and competitive spirit.